

IAS officer gets NY posting for cancer drug trial

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NEW DELHI: The government has relaxed service rules to post a 43-year-old IAS officer diagnosed with cancer in New York so she has access to clinical trials of advanced drugs in the US. Clinical trials are a hit-or-miss option, often requiring long hospital stays, but many terminally-ill patients give them a shot after the existing line of treatment fails.

Mamta, a Jharkhand-cadre officer posted in Ranchi in the institutional finance and programme implementation department, has been recommended for the post of education consul, a human resource development ministry position, in New York.

The civil services board cleared her assignment, sending the rec-



■ IAS officer Mamta can now access clinical trials of advanced drugs.

ommendation to the appointment committee of cabinet for approval. A couple of mandatory qualifications have been put aside to facilitate her relocation — a two-year deputation at the centre and blocking the position by not announcing the vacancy so

that other officers couldn't apply. The officer said she would volunteer for clinical trials of laboratory-stage medicines at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York. In her new role, Mamta will have to promote closer educational collaboration

between the two countries — a task that officials in the HRD ministry say demands frequent travel between New York and Washington. "I have been suffering from the disease for the past four years and the treatment until now has not worked," she said without specifying the nature of the cancer. Questions are being raised if she would be able to do justice to her posting because clinical trials entail long periods of hospitalisation. "Clinical trial is time-consuming and requires a patient to be admitted to hospital for long periods. How can you expect her to work to discharge her duties efficiently?" an officer asked. Since IAS officers are eligible for treatment abroad on government expense, Mamta could have done that without blocking an important position, he said.

clinical trial.